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INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

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SIPDIS

STATE FOR S/SRAP SAJIT GANDHI

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SUBJECT: SWEDISH EU PRESIDENCY'S PLANS FOR AFGHAN ELECTION
MESSAGING

REF: A. STATE 83031

1B. STATE 63551

11. The Swedish EU Presidency is working to develop an EU statement -- "a political blessing" -- to be released in conjunction with the August 20 elections in Afghanistan, MFA Afghanistan Desk Director Mathias Otterstedt told Poloffs August 11. Otterstedt, who had accompanied FM Bildt to Afghanistan at the end of July, said three points will be emphasized:

-- Credible elections represent a chance for the Afghan people to take part in democracy;

-- Complaints of fraud and election irregularities will be noted and taken seriously;

-- Afghanistan's election commission and other authorities should act responsibly and in an unbiased manner.

Otterstedt indicated that these points could be coordinated with U.S. messaging, if there were areas of overlap (reftels). Otterstedt also said that a coordinated press strategy by the U.S. and EU would be important before the EU election observers made their first public reports, probably on August 22. He suggested such coordination take place in Brussels and Kabul, as well as in capitals.

12. Action Request: Post seeks Department guidance on Swedish requests for a coordinated press strategy.

SILVERMAN